

William Shakespeare

Mrs. Tolin/ Mr. Warders

Language Arts- 6th Period

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The Many Facets of Taboo

The World Book Encyclopedia defines Taboo as "an action, object, person, or place forbidden by law or culture" (Dundes).

As pointed out in the Occultopedia, another word for taboo is "tabu" a Polynesian word meaning that which is banned. The Occultopedia also points out that taboo is found among many other cultures including the ancient Egyptians, Jews and others ("Taboo").

Mary Douglas has analyzed the many facets and interpretations of taboos across various cultures. In her view, taboos could be considered a kind of "brain-washing" (2549) as they are transmitted to individuals along with an entire cultural system made up of a pattern of values and norms.

In reference to Freak Shows at circuses, an interesting observation is made that people who possess uncommon features and who willingly go out in public to display such oddities to onlookers are acting as "modern-day taboo breakers" by crossing the "final boundary between societal acceptance and ostracism." (Rothenberg).

In traditional British East Africa, between the time of puberty and marriage, a young Akamba girl must maintain an avoidance relationship with her own father (Freud 17).

Looking at taboo in a modern society, Marvin Harris gives an interesting example of the application of cultural materialism to the Hindu taboo against eating beef (qtd. in McGrath).

In your Works Cited, you must include all of the above parenthetical citations.

See sample on the next page.

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McGrath, Stacy. "Ecological Anthropology." Anthropological Theories: A Guide

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<<http://www.as.ua.edu/ant/Faculty/Murphy/ecologic.htm>>.

Rothenberg, Kelly. "Tattooed People as Taboo Figures in Modern Society."

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